



Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

PO Box 365
Oneida, WI 54155-0365
Phone: 920-869-4380
Fax: 920-869-4040
Website: <http://www.oneidanation.org/>

Gerald Danforth, Chair
Kathy Hughes, Vice-Chair
Patricia Ninham-Hoeft, Secretary
Mercie Danforth, Treasurer

Council Members:

Melinda Danforth
Vince Dela Rosa
Ed Delgado
Paul Ninham
Trish King

Location: Brown and Outagamie Counties, northeast Wisconsin



Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

Tribal Statistics

There are currently 15,336 Oneida tribal members.

- 17 and under = 3,561
- Ages 18 - 65 = 10,641
- 64 and older = 1,134

The Oneida Reservation, located mostly in Brown County, totals 65,400 acres.

- 6,192 acres are tribally owned
- 10,755 acres are considered fee land
- Approximately 2,500 tribal members live on reservation, trust, or fee land

Oneida is the 6th largest employer in Brown County (*Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development*), employing approximately 3,032 people.

Tribal Government

The Oneida Business Committee is composed of nine members.

- A chairperson
- Vice-chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Five council members
- The council meets monthly
- Decisions are made by a majority rule
- Elections are held every three years. Terms are concurrent.

Brief History

For centuries prior to the American Revolution, the Oneida Nation controlled millions of acres of dense forests, beautiful lakes and rivers abundant with game and resources that provided their people with prosperous livelihoods.

Oneida villages were constructed of multi-family longhouses that were protected by surrounding palisades. Within these walls dwelled entire communities complete with sophisticated agricultural beds.

Upon returning home after the Revolutionary War however, Oneida warriors found their villages had been burned and pillaged by the British Army as well as armies from the 13 colonies.

The Oneida Nation had yielded 5.3 million acres of land within the state of New York through two treaties in 1785 and 1788, prior to the Constitution.

The State of New York and various land companies contrived to remove the Iroquois from

their homelands, especially the Oneida whose land was in direct route of the Erie Canal.

In 1821, a delegation of the Six Nations met with representatives from the Menominee and Winnebago Nations to negotiate for fertile and open lands along the western Great Lakes. In an 1822 treaty, the Oneida then purchased a large section of land in a territory that would soon become the state of Wisconsin.

Led by Eleazer Williams, an Episcopal minister reputed to be the long lost Dauphin of France, and Chief Daniel Bread, the first movement of Oneidas to Wisconsin settled in what is now the Grand Chute and Kaukauna area. Dubbed the First Christian Party, this group of 448 people were tribal members who had embraced Christianity.

One year later, the Second Christian Party, sometimes called the Orchard Party, a group composed of 206 Oneidas who were primarily Methodist, arrived from New York and settled along the southern area of Duck Creek.

Official reservation boundaries were established with the 1838 treaty with the Menominee, and in 1841 another migration of Oneida arrived in northeastern Wisconsin. This group of 44 people was referred to as the Pagan Party. As the only group that had not embraced Christianity, they settled around the area known today as Chicago Corners, north of Freedom, and were more isolated than the rest.

Once again however, Oneida lands would fall prey to United States expansion. In 1887, Congress passed the Indian Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Act) which allocated the land to individuals.

Through the next several years, reservation lands continued to dwindle. Since the concept of taxation was so new and not understood by the Oneida people, many Oneidas lost their lands by failing to pay their taxes. Many also lost their lands due to the fraudulent methods of ruthless land companies and the invasion of non-Indians who desired their fertile lands. By 1924, all but a few hundred acres had been lost.

Reorganization of the government and stopping the loss of land came with the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934. It provided the foundation for drafting and adopting the Oneida Constitution two years later, which transformed the tribal government to an elected system with four members serving on a tribal council. This decision, however, was always questioned by the membership because a true majority of tribal members did not participate in the vote. Traditionalists who opposed the transformation did not vote and their voices were not heard. Ultimately, however, the Oneida IRA Charter was approved by the tribe in 1937 and 1,270 acres of land were bought back by the government and placed in trust for the Oneida Nation.

Unfortunately, these developments were unable to counter the harsh economic impact levied by the Depression. With the exception of very limited farming, the opportunity for employment on the Oneida Reservation was virtually non-existent. Substandard living conditions remained widespread well into the 1950's and beyond. Many young Oneida families took advantage of the Federal Relocation Program and other opportunities to leave the reservation in the hope of finding a better way of life in the cities.

It wasn't until the 1970's, two hundred years after the Oneida people had been forced from their lands in New York, that the tide began to turn. Competitive grants were received to fund healthcare and education. In 1972, a community development block grant funded the construction of the Oneida Nation Memorial Building, which was originally designed as a youth recreation center. Today, it is commonly known as the "Civic Center" and through the years has housed the health center, tribal business committee offices, and social services department.

These developments began the momentum that would make the 1980's the most progressive decade for the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin. A jurisdictional lawsuit that had dogged the tribe for years was finally thrown out of court and the Oneida retained their sovereign right to regulate their own lands. With the land base increased to over 6,000 acres, the addition of a tribal school, and soaring employment opportunities, the Oneida Reservation once again has an economy.

When Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988, it effectively recognized tribal governments as sovereign nations. The act further provided the tribes with the ability to regulate various classes of gaming on their reservations. In 1991, for the first time in Wisconsin history, the Oneida Nation entered into a compactual agreement with the state government.

Tribal Services

Law Enforcement

- 26 officers
- Cross-deputized with the Brown County Sheriff's Department
- Funded primarily with tribal funds, some discretionary federal grants, and Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance funds

Court System

- Oneida does not have its own court system, but does have an appeals system
- The appeals system has 11 judges

Education

Oneida youth are educated in five primary school districts. These districts are:

- Seymour School District (326 students/13.2% of the student body)
- West DePere School District (208/10.3%)
- Freedom School District (84/5.4%)
- Green Bay School District (1,020/5%)
- Pulaski School District (103/2.9%)

(Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

Two Tribal Schools:

- Oneida Nation Elementary School is a K - 8th grade school
- Total enrollment of 289 students
- Oneida Nation High School is a 9 - 12th grade school
- Total enrollment is 116 students
- Both schools are accredited
- Some funds from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
- No state equalization aid or charter school funds

Healthcare

- Clinic services include: optometry; Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) programs; diabetic clinic; ambulatory clinic; radiology; behavioral health; mental health; community health; reproductive health; dental; pharmacy and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs

- Funded by Oneida, with some funds coming from the U.S. Indian Health Service; the Women, Infants and Children program and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Social Services

- Indian Child Welfare Act programs
- Domestic abuse prevention
- Adolescent residential treatment
- Psychotherapy
- Elderly services
- Funded through a variety of tribal, state and federal monies

Economic Enterprises

- Oneida employs approximately 3,032 people
- 45% of those are non-native
- 55% are native

<u>Business</u>	<u>Type of Business</u>
Oneida Bingo and Casino Oneida, WI	Gaming/lodging/meeting facility
Oneida One Stops Oneida, WI	Retail convenience store
Tsyuhehkwa Oneida, WI	Traditional foods, grocery
Oneida Orchards Oneida, WI	Agriculture and Black Angus cattle farming